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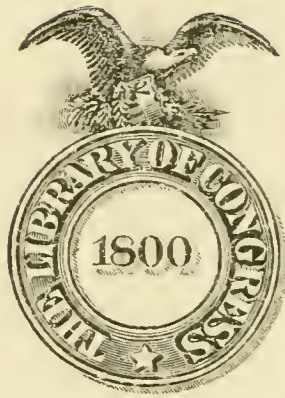
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Massachusetts historical society,
Boston.

Chair given to Govenor William
Taylor by Queen Anne, and the
petition of Christopher Talbot.





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CHAIR GIVEN TO GOVERNOR WILLIAM TAILER
BY QUEEN ANNE, AND THE PETITION
OF CHRISTOPHER TALBOT.

Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

AT a meeting of the MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, held in Boston on Thursday, *October 10*, 1907, Hon. SAMUEL A. GREEN made the following remarks:

I have been requested by Mrs. Elizabeth Anna (Byles) Ellis, of Burlington, New Jersey, to give in her name a chair of some historical interest, and by associations closely connected with Massachusetts, which once belonged to William Tailer, at different times Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, to whom, during one of his administrations, it was presented by Queen Anne. The chair is made of carved oak, and the carving shows the royal crown supported by cherubs, and also the rose of the royal arms. The caning of the seat and of the back has been renewed, and the solid carved bar in front, forming part of the seat, replaces one that was broken. In other respects it is the same as when used by the Lieutenant-Governor nearly two hundred years ago.

Mrs. Ellis is a lady of advanced age, — having been born on December 11, 1813, — and a great-great-granddaughter of Lieutenant-Governor Tailer, whose daughter Rebecca married Mather Byles, a grandson of Increase Mather. By this connection she is also a descendant of John Cotton, whose memorial statue is to be formally transferred to the First Church this afternoon. It was her sister Miss Sarah Louisa Byles who at the March meeting in 1881 presented to this Library the Bible that once belonged to the Mather family. It was

John Cotton 1620

given originally to Mrs. Increase Mather by her father John Cotton, and on the titlepage it bears the autograph of the old Puritan minister. It is a copy of the Geneva version, quarto, printed in London (1599).

Dr. GREEN also said :

The following petition, found among the Massachusetts Archives (CXXVIII. 60) at the State House, suggests a wide range for the imagination. It bears no date, but as Andros was deposed on April 20, 1689, it must have been written before that date. It would be interesting to know what power Mr. Talbot, the writer, had in mind that would propel his engine against wind and tide. Was it the application of steam to machinery? Almost certainly it was not electricity. He may have been the Bell or Edison of that century, who died without making his mark. At any rate, the petition is a curious old paper, and well worth a note in our Proceedings. It is furthermore of interest as showing at that early period in our history that patents were granted in New England, and that the customary limit was for fourteen years.

To S^r EDMOND ANDROS
Knig^t Captain Generall & Govern-
er in Cheif over this his Majestys
Territorys of New : E.

The humble petition of Christopher Talbot Turner in Boston
Humbly sheweth

That whereas your petitioner with great pains & expence hath found out an Engine usefull for divers trades men as turners ropemakers smiths & all sorts of mills for corne sider sawmills & almost any thing that is to be done by wheels with sails & also hath discovered to make a boat sail against the wind & tide & sundry other things with more ease & expedition then hath ben discovered hitherto either in Europe or America. & wheras his Majesty & his royall Predicessors haue at all times been pleas'd graciously to Encourage all undertakings of this nature y^t whosoever finds out any new engine or invention profitable for y^e common good to grant their letters patents for the sole use therof

Therefore y^r petitioner is humbly bold & beggs y^t y^r Excelency will be pleas'd to grant him y^r letters pattents for y^e sole use & improuement of the said Engine in these his Majesties territories of New : E. for 14

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Mass. Hist. Society.
JAN 20 1909

years (as is accustomed) & y^t no other person shall make use of the same or any such like without y^r petitioners consent. who is in duty bound & shall for ever pray

CHRISTOPHER TALBOT

Another instance I recall to mind, where the genius of invention drew near to the door of discovery and found it ajar, but did not enter. It appears in an address made by Wendell Phillips in Music Hall at a Public School Festival, on July 25, 1865, and printed in the Boston Evening Transcript of the next day. The extract is as follows:

There was an old Boston merchant, years ago, wanted a set of china made in Pekin. You know that Boston men, sixty years ago, looked at both sides of a cent before they spent it, and if they earned twelve cents they would save eleven. He could not spare a whole plate, so he sent a cracked one, and when he received the set there was a crack in every piece. The Chinese had imitated the pattern exactly. Now, boys, do not imitate us, or there will be a great many cracks. Be better than we. We have invented a telegraph, but what of that? I expect, if I live forty years, to see a telegraph that will send messages without wire, both ways at the same time. If you do not invent it you are not as good as we are. You are bound to go ahead of us.

It would be interesting to know what germ of an idea was at work in Mr. Phillips's brain at that time. In some matters he was a seer, and perhaps saw the possibilities of the future in wireless telegraphy better than some of his contemporaries. At any rate, the idea never developed and bore fruit. Sometimes it happens that a great discovery is nearly made, but the final stroke is not given in order fully to accomplish it. Often there is a glimmer of a new truth, but yet not clear enough for distinct assertion.

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